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'92 Squadron News'
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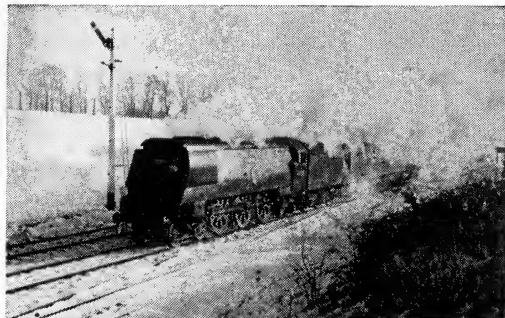
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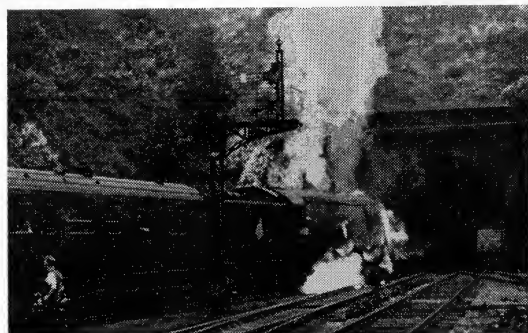
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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following close upon the Society's 2nd birthday is the latest of our occasional Newsletters. Some of the content may already be known to members of long standing: their indulgence is requested.

The Society has expanded very substantially during the past eight months or so and newer members may like to know a little more about the origins of the '92 Squadron' project.

Before proceeding further I think it would be in order to record here a small tribute to our three founder-members, Tony Fielding, Denis Roberts, and Andy Hiles: it was their efforts in forming the Society and launching the project that have enabled us to progress thus far. In particular their work in conjunction with the RAF Museum's production of the special commemorative covers, for it was these covers that made possible the bank loan with which '92 Squadron' was purchased. It is pleasing to record that the loan has now been repaid in full.

In concluding this introductory note may I extend to all our newer members a warm welcome, I trust the association will be a long and happy one.

M.A. Watts.

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92 SQUADRON

That the first impression is the worst impression is an apt phrase when one sees '92 Squadron' as it now stands. Lying in a row with other decrepit looking wrecks all around one's heart sinks. Rust abounds everywhere even to small piles of flake on the track bed beneath each engine. To the amateur a most disheartening sight particularly if presented with a touch of Bristol Channel sea mist and Barry drizzle.

Fortunately the day chosen for mechanical examination was dry and sunny and we were able to give the engine a good look over (and under). Let us deal with that superstructure first since it either delights or offends and gives 92 its character. The air-smoothed casings are very thin sheet steel carried upon outriggers and a 1" angle iron basket. The basket and outriggers are sound but the casing is largely rotten at its laps and joints and considerable replacements will be needed. This task is of relatively minor importance, quickly accomplished and relatively cheap. Indeed it might even be better to rip the lot off, cab sheeting and all, and replate from scratch.

In course of rotting away the casings have done a good job as they have acted as an umbrella for the rest of the engine and the real engine lying beneath the 'tin' is in reasonable condition. Some items are in a remarkably good state of preservation.

Turning to the meat of the problem and starting at the railheads, the wheels appear sound and free of any obvious damage though it has since been suggested that they are due for wheel turning to restore tread form. Unless the engine is intended for high speed running this could be put off for a considerable time.

From wheels to axles and boxes, bearing lands appear unscored and the upper halves of the brasses are still in place, in all places though the lowers have more or less disappeared. Frame horns appear tight and well fitting with no evidence of wear steps in the side faces where the boxes have ridden. So much muck and heavy grease abounds in these areas that preservation is virtually total with bright metal appearing as one cleans.

The bogie truck appears very good all round and frame= to bogie slides are clean and smooth. The back end Cartazzie truck has not faired so well as even now it is piled high with ash and coal. Considerable rust flake is evident and I think we have some small problems whittling out various portions and welding in filler plates.

The main loco frame is sound and well preserved as are all stretched and bracing. Various minor details show degrees of decay but all can be recovered without undue difficulty.

At this point it is worth mentioning the axle and suspension lubrication system. This has been cut away to obtain copper pipe. Originally a centralised lubrication system was fitted. It is not necessary to rebuild this in total provided all points previously oil drip fed are catered for with local oiler boxes. For some reason this particular feature seems to bother people.

Cylinders are virtually complete but missing all copper items such as trap relief valves, drain cocks etc. Since these were standard SR items we may yet find odd ones lying around and be able to re-kit the engine. Obviously it was impossible to ascertain the condition of the bores and piston valves and it suffices to say that they are still in place. In any event complete strip, clean, possible skimming, rebuild and setting will be necessary.

The valve gear is largely in place but the chain for the gear drive is missing. The remainder appears in good condition and is plastered in relatively clean oil and grease. It is all very well having valve gear but the first real problem now arises. The connecting and coupling rods have gone leaving yawning gaps between cross-heads and crankpins. If suitable rods cannot be found they will just have to be manufactured, and at some considerable expense.

Brake gear is complete and blocks appear only modestly grooved and worn. Drawgear and buffing gear is complete though the front buffers have been taken from a similar loco and fitted to 92. All springs look good save for two missing off the tender.

All round a heavy task of restoration faces the Society. The loco is basically good but missing any item of cupreous nature which the scrap man's torch could take off. Of course it is not absolutely necessary to obtain exact replacements. The injectors, vacuum ejectors, snifters, trap cocks, cylinder lubrication systems and all boiler fittings can be replaced by alternatives provided they achieve similar performance characteristics. 92 Squadron is in a condition which can be recovered to full running standard if the Society so wishes. The basis as it now stands is not as bad as it looks.

M.W. SMART

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OUR PATRON

AIR VICE-MARSHAL R.W.G. FREER CBE MBIM RAF

Air Vice-marshal Robert William George Freer was born in Darjeeling in September 1923 and, after attending Gosport Grammar School, joined the Royal Air Force in 1942. He was commissioned after flying training in South Africa in September 1943. He then served as a Flying Instructor on Harvards in South Africa until the end of the war.

After a further spell of instructing at Tern Hill (No 6 FTS) and Cranwell, he became Staff Officer to the Assistant Commandant at the RAF College Cranwell from 1948-50. He spent the next two years in Nos 54 and 614 Squadrons flying Vampires and Meteors. From 1952-54 he commanded the Instrument Rating Squadron at the Central Fighter Establishment and then took command of No 92 Squadron - one of the two squadrons in RAF Fighter Command flying the American F86 Sabre - and in 1955 was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

After completing the Staff College course at Andover in 1957/58, an exchange posting followed to the USAF where he was on the Directing Staff of the USAF Academy, Colorado Springs. He returned home to take the Flying College Course at Manby before joining the staff of the Chief of Defence Staff in 1961. He was appointed to command the multi-role station at RAF Seletar in Singapore on promotion to Group Captain in 1963 and was made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in January 1966.

On return to the UK in 1966 he became Deputy Director of Defence Plans (Air) at the Ministry of Defence and, following promotion to Air Commodore in January 1968, attended the Imperial Defence College Course. In the same year he was appointed an Air Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty the Queen. He then became Deputy Commandant of the RAF Staff College at Bracknell, the post he held prior to taking up the appointment of Senior Air Staff Officer, Near East Air Force in March 1971 in the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. In December 1972 he became the Air Officer Commanding No 11 Group, Strike Command.

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Referring again to Royal Air Force support, we wish to extend our thanks to two Cadet Squadrons in particular who have given so much in the way of elbow grease, loan of equipment, etc. Congratulations to 2491 (Lyneham) and 248 (Letchworth) Squadrons.

RAF help extended to a visit to Roxton Park, Beds. in support of our display stand on the Battle of Britain Display Day by Spitfire AB910 piloted by Sqn Ldr Jones. AB910 is a Mark VB and the oldest serviceable Spitfire in the world. In commemoration of 92's top scoring part in the Battle of Britain and indeed the whole of the Air-War, it carries their wartime code letters QJ. Our thanks go to Sqn Ldr Jones, and Sqn Ldr Gambold of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

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SUMMER DRAW - RESULTS

Drawn on Saturday 3rd August 1974.

1st Prize:- Cassette Tape Recorder: Ticket No 2250
K F Hammond, Faversham, Kent.

2nd Prize:- Camera: Ticket No 2691
Mr J Morris, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

3rd Prize:- Wristwatch: Ticket No 4349
J Trimmer, Andover, Hants.

4th Prize to 10th Prize: Peter Dominic Wine Voucher:
Ticket No 4375 Mrs S.M. Wilding, Halesowen, Worcs.
Ticket No 1581 J. Ammiss, Broadstairs, Kent.
Ticket No 0644 D. Major, Andover, Hants.
Ticket No 1211 R. E. Hiscock, Andover, Hants.
Ticket No 3294 Mrs Howard, Letchworth, Herts.
Ticket No 3812 Mr W. J. Goldsmith, New Eltham, London.
Ticket No 2866 Mr A. E. Oram, Barry, Glamorgan.

A special mention to Bruce Plumley, in Andover who sold 50 books of tickets. This was a magnificent achievement. The Draw realised well over a Hundred Pounds profit for the Society. Many thanks to all those who sold and purchased tickets.

LETTERS

Have you any comments about the Society? the Engine? or any topics vaguely connected with the Society, drop us a line, we would be pleased to print any interesting points of view. - Ed.

FOR SALE OR WANTED

If you have anything to buy or sell, send details to Editor (see page 1 for address) for inclusion in our next newsletter.

Enthusiastic member wishes to purchase West Country Crest 'DEVON' in exchange for 'OKEHAMPTON', cash adjustment either way.

Good clear colour photo of 'DEVON' also required.
Write to:- Maurice Preece, 20 Beausale Croft, Mount Nod, COVENTRY.

WANTED:- 'O' gauge model railway equipment, 2 and 3 rail engines, 2 rail rolling stock. Please write:-
Mike Watts, 53 Yardley, Letchworth, Herts.

FOR SALE:- Bolex standard 8 cine camera C8L9, recently completely overhauled, single frame, lock-on shutter mechanism, photo-electric aperture setting, excellent condition £24.00p. B.C. Woods (Ed) 66 Amanda Crescent, Sunnyside Trailer Court, Clifton, Beds.

Search out your old photographs, if you have a reasonable picture of our locomotive please let us know.

RAFFLE TICKETS

A few books of raffle tickets are enclosed, please attempt to sell these if you can. Return counterfoils and unseald tickets, plus remittance of course! in cheque or postal order form by 1st September. Further tickets available from ED. - GOOD LUCK. Counterfoils etc to be returned to B.C. Woods (address on front page).

SHARE CERTIFICATES

If you are still awaiting your certificates, please drop a line to Mike Watts our chairman, address on page 1. THANKYOU.

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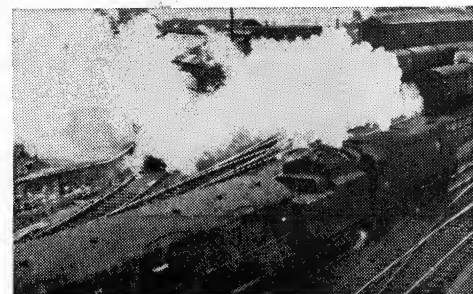
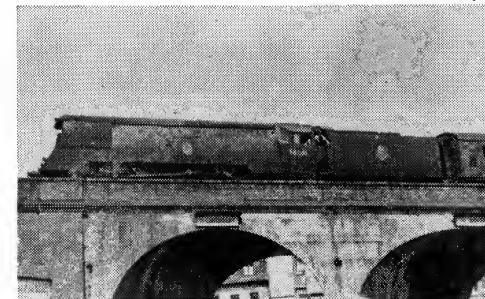
C. J. HORNBY (Royal Air Force trained!) (forgive the pun)

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